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The Honorable Anne M. Gobi, Senate Chair
Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture
Massachusetts State House, Room 513
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Smitty Pignatelli, House Chair
Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture
Massachusetts State House, Room 473F
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairs Gobi and Pignatelli,

As the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture hears legislation today on waste management and recycling, I would like to underscore the importance of pursuing an ambitious legislative agenda to address our state's waste challenges. Simply stated, we are not doing enough to meet these challenges. If left unaddressed, they will have major environmental and financial impacts on our residents. I urge the Committee to prioritize and act on legislation that will move us toward significant waste reduction and reuse.

As we come to the end of the period covered by the 2010-2020 MassDEP Solid Waste Master Plan (SWMP), it is evident that we have not taken effective steps to address this issue. While the plan set a goal of reducing annual statewide waste disposal to 4.55 million tons by 2020, in 2018 we disposed of 5.7 million tons. This level is essentially unchanged since 2011.

Continued reliance on landfilling, combusting, and exporting such large amounts of waste is unsustainable. As the draft 2030 SWMP documents, our state's landfill capacity is nearly exhausted, our waste combustion and materials recovery facilities are fully utilized, and our ability to export waste to neighboring states is severely limited. The net result is that even if we achieve a 30% reduction in waste by 2030, we will still face a net shortfall in disposal capacity of 700,000 tons per year. These hard constraints on waste disposal capacity will mean

higher costs for municipal solid waste programs and the residents who pay for them, while also burdening businesses and institutions that contract on their own for waste disposal.

In addition, all of us – particularly those living in communities that host disposal facilities – will continue to suffer significant negative impacts from waste disposal on the climate, environment and public health. Nationally, the greenhouse gas emissions that are generated over the full lifecycle of disposed materials (including emissions from overall production, use, transportation and disposal of products and packaging) are estimated to account for 42 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions.

It is clear that we must adopt a broad array of solutions that will help discourage waste generation in the first place. With the upcoming release of the final 2030 SWMP, we have a renewed opportunity to focus our efforts on the best ways to encourage this crucial shift.

Possible options include:

- Increased organic waste diversion
- Pay-as-you-throw
- Single-use packaging reduction
- Extended producer responsibility
- Expanded reuse and processing of construction and demolition debris
- Incentives for a transition to a circular economy

Every day, more people in Massachusetts seek to shift their individual behavior in order to reduce their contribution to the state's unsustainable waste levels. People are reducing the amount and type of trash they generate by composting, shopping locally, bringing their own reusable bags to the store, or eliminating single-use plastics from their lives. This demonstrates that there is a real desire and demand for change. It is our responsibility as lawmakers to support residents by providing new and expanded opportunities to reduce waste. In doing so, we can encourage the transition to a sustainable solution to our state's waste problem.

Thank you very much for taking the time to consider these views. I hope your Committee will prioritize effective and ambitious legislation to address the waste crisis.

Best regards,



Jonathan Hecht
State Representative
29th Middlesex District